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C O N F I D E N T I A L KINSHASA 001692

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [ECON](#) [CG](#)

SUBJECT: REOPENING OLD DEBATES

Classified By: PolCouns MSanderson, reasons 1.4 b/d.

¶1. (C) The first week of the new Parliamentary session was disrupted by a debate on whether sitting Parliamentarians who have been named to posts on parastatal companies should be allowed to occupy double positions (and receive double salaries). National Assembly President Olivier Kamitatu told PolCouns October 9 that it currently appears that individuals will have to decide to resign one position or the other, i.e., quit the Parliament or quit the parastatals. The debate is particularly significant because among those affected are the party heads in the Assembly of the RCD (Moise Nyarangabo) and MLC (Thomas Luhaka). Nyarangabo earlier told the Ambassador that if forced to choose, the Parliamentary seat was more important, and he reportedly has sent a letter to Kamitatu September 30 renouncing his parastatal position in favor of continuing in the Assembly. Luhaka, however, told PolCouns October 8 that he has instructed the MLC Parliamentary group (with the approval of party president Vice President Jean-Pierre Bemba) to insist that the question be reviewed by the Supreme Court, since the Parliament does not have authority to rule on position appointments for the parastatals. Kamitatu said that over 50 members of the National Assembly are affected by the debate.

¶2. (C) Comment: Coincidentally, only President Kabila's party, the PPRD, is not affected by this question -- which one of their members introduced for debate. The other three groups (RCD, MLC and civil society) all had named leading members of the National Assembly to directorial positions on various parastatals. It looks like a win-win for the PPRD, albeit a dangerous one. On the one hand, they hope to force some of their major opponents (such as Luhaka and Nyarangabo) out of Parliament. On the other hand, they are forcing a reopening of the question of how the parastatals are divided.

The reason this is a dangerous game, however, is that both of these outcomes carry with them the risk of seriously impeding government activity at a time when time is critical.

While most of the Parliamentarians almost certainly will be instructed by their party leaders to give up the parastatal positions (thereby ensuring that Parliament can continue its work pending a definitive reading), both the MLC and RCD will be hostile participants in the process, at least in the short term. If the question of parastatal division really does need to be reopened (because of the inability of the RCD, MLC and civil society to name other candidates in whom they repose confidence), the acrimonious debate could affect electoral preparations.

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